

(Milwaukee, WI)— On Sunday, September 17, Congresswoman Gwen Moore will be leading Milwaukee's first Brides' Walk, an event to focus on the problem of domestic violence and to celebrate survivors within the Latino community. As part of the event, women will parade through the streets in wedding gowns to honor the memory of Gladys Ricart, a Latina who was killed on her wedding day in 1999 by an abusive former partner, and to raise awareness and support for the UMOS Latina Resource Center.

"Our Brides' Walk will be a first for Milwaukee and for the state, but the strength and determination of women in the Latino community is not a new phenomenon," said Congresswoman Moore. "On Sunday, Milwaukee's Latinas will send a message that domestic violence should not be acceptable in ANY culture, and that for victims of domestic violence, there is somewhere to turn."

The Brides' Walk, organized in conjunction with Milwaukee Mujeres Against Domestic Violence, County Supervisor Peggy West, and the UMOS Latina Resource Center, coincides with the city's celebration of Mexican Independence Day. Congresswoman Hilda Solis (CA-32), Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, Lt Governor Barbara Lawton, and Brides' March founder Josie Ashton will also be in attendance. Registration will be from 8-10am at the UMOS Latina Resource Center located at 802 W. Mitchell St. in Milwaukee. A press conference will occur at 10am, with the Speak Out to follow at 10:25am. The Brides' Walk itself will kick-off from the Center at 11am.

Brides' Marches have occurred all over the country in the recent years, inspired by Josie Ashton's 1,600 mile walk from Ricart's New Jersey home to Miami in 2001, during which she visited domestic violence shelters along the route to raise awareness. Congresswoman Moore met Ashton at the National Organization for Women's Annual Intrepid Awards dinner in September 2005 and was inspired to organize a Brides' Walk in Milwaukee, an event which will be the first of its kind in the entire state of Wisconsin. After serving a two year term as Executive Director of Safespace Foundation, an organization that help victims of violent crimes in Miami, Ashton currently serves as a victim advocate for the Broward County State Attorney's Office.

In coordination with the Brides' Walk, Congresswoman Moore has introduced H. Res 1012, a resolution in the U.S. House of Representative honoring the objective of Brides' Marches nationwide to protest domestic violence. The resolution currently has 38 original co-sponsors, with many more lawmakers expected to lend their support. In 2005, Congresswoman Moore

introduced the Safe Housing Identification Exemption for the Lives of Domestic Violence Victims (SHIELD) Act, to ensure that victims of domestic violence who have fled their abuser could not then be tracked and found by them through the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) new Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). A modified version of the bill was included in the Violence Against Women Act, which was signed into law earlier this year.

###